



2000 Inductees



Joseph Hieb

Joseph Hieb was appointed to the Murdo-based West Central Electric board of directors in 1965 and has served as the cooperative's president for the past 21 years.

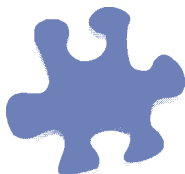
"My satisfaction was seeing members get electricity and good service as reasonably as they possibly could," said Hieb. "I was just doing my job. My goal was to make things better for the members."

During Hieb's tenure on the board, he has helped guide the cooperative through many crucial stages.

"Hieb has skillfully led West Central Electric Cooperative in making decisions which have assured a successful future for the cooperative," wrote West Central manager Steve Reed in Hieb's nomination for the Hall of Fame.

Hieb's commitment to his neighbors extends beyond his work as a director for the electric cooperative. Hieb, who lives near Reliance, S.D., was an original incorporator of the Lyman-Jones Rural Water System in 1967, which merged in 1994 to form West River/Lyman-Jones Rural Water Systems.

"Just like the electrical lines that carried power to every rural home, Hieb dreamed of establishing water lines to rural residents," Reed wrote.



Keith Taylor

Keith Taylor's work as a director at Groton-based James Valley Telecommunications Cooperative has spanned nearly five decades. He

first joined the board in 1952. Since then, three complete systems of communications were built to position James Valley as one of the most modern communications systems in the area.

"I'm a firm believer that we wouldn't have electricity or telephone service of the quality we have today if we hadn't done this on a cooperative basis," said Taylor.

Taylor has assisted cooperative members by serving on state and national cooperative boards through the years. Taylor has served on the James Valley board since 1952 when the cooperative was known as James Valley Cooperative Telephone Company. He has represented the cooperative for nearly 40 years on the South Dakota Associated Telephone Cooperatives board and hasn't missed an annual meeting of the National Telephone Cooperative Association since 1963. He also served for 10 years on the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives board.

"I'm a firm believer that this (cooperatives) is the one way we can serve the rural people. At the present time, we're serving them better than some of the other big companies have – we offer features that the big companies don't offer in rural areas," said Taylor.

